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05

Peralassery Subramania temple, Kerala
Dedicated to Serpents

 Kokila



Indian Culture ● Indian Art ● Indian Lifestyle ● Indian Religion

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A watercolor illustration of an elephant standing in a landscape. On its back is a howdah carrying three people: a man in a yellow shirt and hat, a woman in a pink sari, and a man in a blue shirt. A large, colorful umbrella with pink, orange, and yellow fringes is held over them. The elephant is decorated with a red and yellow cloth. The title 'A TO Z INDIA' is overlaid in the center.

A TO Z INDIA

ENGLISH & TAMIL
MONTHLY MAGAZINE



04

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: LIGHTS AND LEGENDS OF DIWALI - THE MANY STORIES BEHIND THE GRAND OLD FESTIVAL

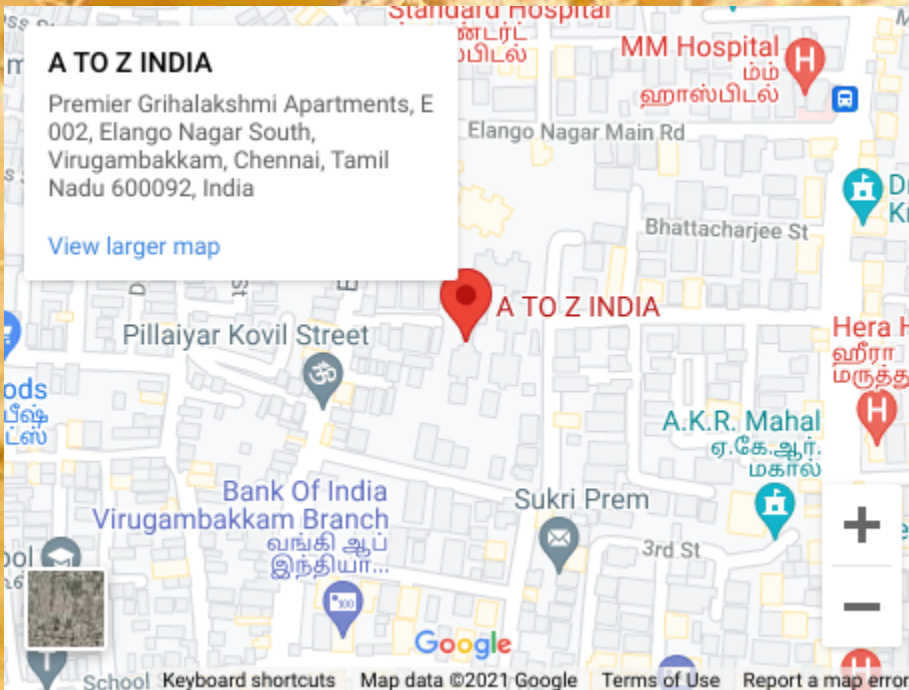
The festival of Diwali in India is celebrated over a period of five days. The first day of Diwali is called Dhanvantari Triyodashi or Dhanteras. On this day, Lord Dhanwantari, the god of medicine, came out of the ocean with the science of Ayurveda for mankind. The second day of Diwali is called Naraka Chaturdashi. The third day is for Lakshmi Puja.

08

INDIA'S AND ASIA'S FIRST NEWSPAPER - THE STORY OF HICKY'S BENGAL GAZETTE

Once upon a time in 18th century Ireland, there was a man named James Augustus Hicky.....

[A TO Z INDIA: Editorial Address](#)



FROM THE EDITOR

A TO Z INDIA magazine covers the Indian through his art, culture, lifestyle, religion, etc. This magazine gives an insight into the life of Indians from an angle uncovered by others. Turn to find out what it is about and to immerse yourself into an entirely different culture.

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A TO Z INDIA Magazine has made a constant care to make sure that content is accurate on the date of publication. The views expressed in the articles reflect the author(s) opinions.

From the Editor's Desk:

Lights and Legends of Diwali -

The Many Stories Behind The Grand Old Festival



Once upon a time there was a great warrior, Prince Rama, who had a beautiful wife named Sita. There was also a terrible demon king, Ravana. He had twenty arms and ten heads, and was feared throughout the land. He wanted to make Sita his wife, and one day he kidnapped her and took her away in his chariot. Clever Sita left a trail of her jewellery for Rama to follow. Rama followed the trail of glittering jewellery until he met the monkey king and Hanuman who became his friend and agreed to help find Sita. Messages were sent to all the monkeys throughout India, and through them to the entire Vanara Kingdom, who set out to find Sita. After a very long search, Hanuman found Sita imprisoned on an island. Rama's army of the Vanaras couldn't reach the island, so they began to build a bridge. Soon the entire Vanara Kingdom throughout India, large and small, came to help. When the bridge was built, they rushed across it and fought a mighty battle. When Rama killed the evil Ravana with a magic arrow, the whole world rejoiced. Rama and Sita began their long journey back to their land, and everybody lit oil lamps to guide them on their way and welcome them back. Ever since, people light lamps at Diwali to remember that light triumphs over dark and good triumphs over evil.

The festival of Diwali in India is celebrated over a period of five days. The first day of Diwali is called Dhanvantari Triyodashi or Dhanteras. On this day, Lord Dhanwantari, the god of medicine, came out of the ocean with the science of Ayurveda for mankind. The second day of Diwali is called Naraka Chaturdashi. The third day is for Lakshmi Puja. The fourth day is Govardhan Puja, the day when Lord Krishna asked the people of Vrindavan to pray to Giri Govardhan, the hill, instead of Indra. The fifth day is dedicated to brothers and sisters and is celebrated as Bhai Dooj. It is based on the belief that in the Vedic Era, Lord of Death, Yama, once visited his sister Yamuna. He gave her a boon that whoever would visit her sister on this day, would be liberated of all his sins and will achieve moksha.

Whether you're a believer of these legends and stories or not, there is one thing you're sure to do on Diwali, and that is to celebrate it with lights and happiness.

Happy Diwali! 😊

Indira Srivatsa

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Peralassery Subramania temple, Kerala:

Dedicated to Serpents



Ever heard of the snake temple, Peralassery, also known for its unique stepwell and for being open to people of all faiths? This holds true in the case of Sri Subramanya Temple, situated 14 km away from Kannur in Kerala. Kannur itself is home to many temples but the one dedicated to Lord Subramanya in Peralassery is unique for its architecture and associated legends. Here Lord Rama enshrined Lord Subramanya. According to the Hindu scripture Ramayana, the Prince of Ayodhya, Rama, during his course of wanderings in the forests of South India in search of his kidnapped spouse Sita, visited this particular site in Peralassery. He intuitively felt the invisible energies of Lord Subramanya emanating from this place. To consecrate the site, Rama decided to install an idol of Lord Subramanya, which the world would later worship. Today, there are many stone images of cobras and other serpents at the temple, duly worshipped by the visitors.

This is why it lures pilgrims. It is faith led by the powerful ancient legend linked to this temple that attracts pilgrims to this place. Legend has it that Lord Subramanya aka Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva, appeared at the temple site in the form of a five-headed serpent and lived in the pond for a long time. As a result, the waters of the pond turned sacred, and people started visiting the pond in the hope of getting rid of their miseries as the word spread. There is an Ashoka tree in the temple premises underneath which is a snake hole. Many pilgrims perform Naga Aradhana (Snake worship) by offering hen's eggs and milk to the snakes residing in the cave to get rid of various maladies. Another amazing fact about this temple is that people



Peralassery Subramania temple, Kerala:

Dedicated to Serpents



from all religions are allowed to offer worship at this shrine unlike many prominent temples in the state, where only Hindus are allowed entry. This is why you should visit Peralassery Sri Subramanya Temple.

Visiting this ancient shrine is a special blessing in itself. Yet, visitors take delight in the benediction they receive in the form of the heavenly delicious Payasam (rice, milk and jaggery pudding). There is a large courtyard in the temple premises, where devotees can sit and absorb the quietness at pre-dusk or early dawn.

Betrothed and childless couples can pray for progeny by tying wooden cradles on the holy trees and those afflicted with Naga dosham in their natal chart can ask for redemption from the presiding deities.



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The Story of oppression, audacity and determination:

India's and Asia's first newspaper - The Story of Hicky's Bengal Gazette



Once upon a time in 18th century Ireland, there was a man named James Augustus Hicky. Having lost his father at a young age, Hicky didn't have a great head-start in life. Like most Irish thrill seekers of his time, Hicky came to London. Just as Hicky negotiated his place in the grimy metropolis, in came another young boy from Amsterdam hoping to make a living, just as Hicky did. Born to British expats in the Netherlands, William Bolts was about the same age as Hicky. The two never crossed paths, but their stories did. Coming back to Hicky, he tried quite a few vocations in London before settling on one. He first apprenticed with a printer, then a lawyer, with a brief stint with the Royal Navy. Eventually, he decided to go east - to India.

India was a hot destination those days. Young enterprising men from all over the Isle were sailing to this exotic land of elephants and maharajas, hoping to make a fortune. This was the "gold rush" of the Orient. One day, he boarded an East India Company vessel named the Rockingham as a surgeon's mate and set sail for India. He'd worked for this surgeon earlier on one of his stints in the Atlantic slave trade. Nearly six months later, two years after the Great Bengal Famine of 1770, Hicky was in Calcutta. Looking at the city Hicky disembarked in, it was impossible to tell, over a million had starved to death here, only a couple of years ago. The bustle was surreal.

To dreamy Europeans back then, Calcutta was the "Promised Land." Here, India's squalor lived right next to English grandeur. The city was divided between two distinct quarters, one for the wealthy British and the other for everything else. While the former was neatly garnished with stately manors and bougainvillea avenues, the "Black Town" was littered with hovels and everything unsightly. This seedy underbelly housed a vibrant mix of not only India's Hindus and Muslims but also Europe's subaltern here for a second lease on life, all in a most intimate proximity. There was money to be made even in Calcutta's destitution. Some British immigrants made as much as 40,000 pounds a year. Even the average Company clerk made nearly a thousand pounds a year. For perspective, the average Londoner made less than twenty a year back then.

Against this backdrop Hicky found himself in Calcutta, a city founded less than 90 years ago. Nearly penniless, he knew where he belonged for now - Black Town. But Company servants weren't just making money. They were making illicit money. They practiced bribery, embezzlement, and everything in between to make the kind of money their wealthiest of friends back home could only dream of. In other words, the Company drained India, and the servants drained the Company. This is one of the reasons the East India Company skirted insolvency even as India bled dry.

As for Bolts, he'd left London long before Hicky. He was frustrated with his worsening relationship with the East India Company, so he decided to start a newspaper to vent his anger. He was almost there. He'd even put out notices all over Calcutta announcing his paper. But before the first print could even see daylight, he was charged with insolvency and deported back to Britain. He was represented in this lawsuit by a fellow British expat and salt trader named Peter Reed. Reed was not a trained lawyer, but he did his best to secure a favorable judgment for his client. He failed. Insolvency was just a pretext. Bolts' story ends here, but Reed will surface later.

For now, let's get back to Hicky. Hicky's first vocation was as a self-proclaimed surgeon in the slums of

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Santha

Calcutta. Then he took out a loan and bought a vessel to make money ferrying cargo between Madras and Calcutta. But one day, bad weather ruined his boat, his cargo, and his fortunes. Unable to square off his debts, Hicky landed in a debtors' prison. Unshaken, Hicky decided to put his prior experience as a printer's apprentice to use. So he spent his entire savings of about two hundred pounds to jerry-rig a printing press. Soon he was printing almanacs, handbills, and other documents for a fee while still in jail. This took off. Hicky worked from dawn through midnight, printing everything that came his way.

But one could accomplish only so much from the confines of a prison. He wanted out and succeeded thanks to a lawyer named William Hickey. Once out, determined to strike gold in the printing business, Hicky solicited Eyre Coote, a Company officer, and landed a fat contract. So much so that he borrowed 4,000 rupees to buy the tools and hire the men needed to fulfill the order. This could have made him a very wealthy man. But things went south when Coote left Calcutta, and Warren Hastings practically refused to acknowledge the contract, much less honor it. Thus began James Hicky's bitter spell with the East India Company. Since he couldn't print for the Company, there's only one other thing he could do with his equipment. **A newspaper!**

India didn't have one at the time. In fact, nor did Asia. The year was 1780. Hicky put up posters all over Black Town announcing his newspaper. News those days was hand-written in sheets which were then delivered personally by hired messengers. Not only was this a tedious process, but it was also expensive and vulnerable to copying errors. Hicky's press would eliminate all of that. Hicky's paper would also replace the stationary advertising boards of Calcutta and help advertisers reach more customers directly. The British were fighting four simultaneous wars at that time, and timely news was a hot commodity. To avoid controversies, Hicky resolved to remain apolitical and stay away from scandals. His only commitment was to print nothing but "Truth and Facts" while filtering out anything that could offend anyone in the slightest. This, however, was not an easy commitment to keep as Hicky would soon realize. He set up his press at no. 67, Radha Bazar on January 29, 1780. The first copies of Asia's first-ever newspaper were finally out. Its name was Hicky's **Bengal Gazette**. It was Saturday. The next one would only come out next Saturday, it was a weekly periodical. Each cost one rupee and had four pages, the first three for news and the remaining two for advertisements. That was expensive, but the niche offered zero competition. Hicky's paper was ripe for monopoly. The Gazette became an instant hit. As promised, Hicky remained nonpartisan and non-offensive. But he still managed to sneak in a healthy dose of satire and humor in his writings. Also in line with his commitment, he kept the paper open to inputs from across the board, so long as they were not offensive or political. He printed letters and opinion pieces that agreed with his own views and also those that didn't. For instance, despite his own parochial notions on women's place in society, he printed a letter from an Anglo-Indian woman who advocated women's rights and female sexual freedom.

On the news front, Hicky focused on Calcutta. Accidents, crimes, and other events that affected the city found space in Hicky's Gazette. Criticism of the city's state of affairs on civic amenities was the extent of his politics. The paper carried news of putrefying corpses in the streets and overflowing cemeteries. Since the paper was mostly read by Company officials and other influential members of the society, Hicky's words

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India's and Asia's first newspaper - The Story of Hicky's Bengal Gazette



soon started carrying weight. His influence grew. Complaints raised in his paper increasingly started getting addressed by the government. Calcutta suffered from many things—poverty, disease, crime, etc. Topping the list amongst them was fire. He wrote about it in one of the editions and demanded the authorities to do something about it. And the authorities responded. The Company released Bye-Law, a slew of fresh proposals banning thatched roofs and enacting a brand new property tax for road repairs. This faced bitter resistance as taxation without representation. Not too long ago, a similar move had cost the East India Company its American territories. By now, Hicky had begun a clear departure from his commitment to nonpartisan reporting. His influence had given him visible power. He intended to use it for the upliftment of fellow subalterns around him. Bengal Gazette started hosting increasingly political letters and opinions sharply critical of the administration.

Being the only mainstream news media in the continent gave Hicky's Bengal Gazette an enviable level of authenticity. News it carried was often picked up verbatim by papers such as Britain's London Chronicle, France's Journal Politique, and Germany's Politisches Journal. Often, it even made it across the Atlantic to the New World. Hicky duly recognized this growing influence of his work. His reach made him bolder. He was now treading on dangerous terrain.

Hicky's Bengal Gazette had monopolized a niche that had no challenger. This was about to change. Enter Bernard Messink and Peter Reed. Now employed with the East India Company, the two men couldn't have a more diverse background. Neither had any experience printing, much less printing newspapers. The two men started off aggressive and went straight for the jugular. Besides putting up notices announcing their paper all over Calcutta, they reached out to Hicky's subscribers individually and nudged them to switch. Finally, on November 18, 1780, Bernard Messink and Peter Reed put out the first-ever copy of India's second newspaper, the **India Gazette**. Messink's contacts at the Belvedere Estate helped him secure free postage for his deliveries. This was a significant edge over Hicky's business as the latter had to pay for his own postage. Hicky was not aware of this edge.

Nevertheless, he was determined to do something about it. Hicky turned to the only tool he had to air his angst - his newspaper. Over the following several editions, he consistently attacked Simeon Droz, Chief of the Board of Trade, to play a role in this conspiracy. Hicky was convinced Droz had orchestrated the whole postage exemption deal for Messink and Reed as revenge.

Right off the bat, the two newspapers found themselves on two opposing sides of the ideological divide. While Hicky's Gazette remained anti-establishment, pro-poor, Messink-Reed's sucked up to the establishment and followed the money. It was a clear liberal-conservative divide. Hicky's constant barbs on Droz did not go down well with Hastings, who promptly moved to suppress Bengal Gazette's circulation. Orders were issued to the Postmaster General to ban Bengal Gazette's deliveries. Since these orders had come without a formal lawsuit, Hicky saw them as an act of one man's tyranny. Although he refrained from naming Hastings or even Droz, he continued to make obvious insinuations. Luckily for him though, his fears proved wrong. Instead, driven by the publicity Hasting's decree brought, Hicky's subscription grew. He had

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Santha

to hire messengers to hand-deliver the copies to offset his postal ban. As the voice against tyranny and despotism, his paper gained a cult following amongst the subaltern of Calcutta. This unexpected public support injected Hicky with a fresh dose of adrenaline. He was getting bolder by the day, and the gloves were irreversibly off now. Hicky now took a clear political stand and announced his determination to dismantle Hastings' autocracy, again, without directly naming the latter. James Hicky was flirting with persecution now. Many others had gone down this road in the past and ended up destroyed.

But none could shake his conviction. Hastings had to go. His Gazette was now a vehicle of free speech and revolution, a sharp departure from his original stance against political journalism. The paper no longer gave prominence to civic issues. Instead, it was now obsessed with Hastings and his cohorts.

Hicky started dragging the Company over hot coals for corruption and nepotism. His resentment was no longer a matter of personal grudge, he had become the unofficial political bullhorn of the oppressed. "No taxation without representation" became his other battle cry. He genuinely believed all men had equal rights and those rights were unalienable. Of course, by all men he meant all White men.

1782 would see the end of a seven-year war between the Company and the Marathas, the First Anglo-Maratha War. The Marathas won this round. Thousands of soldiers had been sent to their slaughter to fulfill the Governor-General's pipe-dream of absolute dominance. Hicky not only criticized this move, he even crossed the line to start making extremely personal attacks on Hastings. If there was anything worse than sedition in Company Rule, it was insolence. Calling a sitting Governor-General names like "the Great Mogul" and "Clive's miserable successor" amounted to just that.

Hicky carried on unperturbed. In the March 31 edition of Hicky's Bengal Gazette, he dropped another bomb. In a front-page feature article, Hicky accused Johann Zacharias Kiernander of embezzlement and fraud. Kiernander was an extremely well-connected clergyman from Sweden who had come to Calcutta as the first Protestant missionary in Bengal. Hicky accused Kiernander of desecrating the Church by making money off its property. He also accused him of stealing funds meant for orphan kids. These were grave accusations against a "man of God." Bengal Gazette now carried unambiguous calls for mutiny. He challenged the sepoys to disobey Hastings as Hastings broke Company rules. He started seeing himself as the Governor-General's biggest nemesis. Perhaps the latter saw him thus too. Hicky's stance quickly went from advocacy to provocation. On June 12, 1781, James Augustus Hicky was arrested on charges of libel. The suit had been brought by the most powerful man on the subcontinent, Warren Hastings. Hicky's bail was set for 40,000 rupees. The man made less than half that amount in a year, so he failed to pay. And once again, after four eventful years, Hicky found himself in a Calcutta prison. He did continue to print from jail for a while, but eventually, he ran out of funds and could print no more. On March 30, 1782, Calcutta received the last edition of Hicky's Bengal Gazette. Hicky was released from prison two years later but never went back to printing again. Having lived the rest of his life in relative poverty and anonymity, James Augustus Hicky died at sea eighteen years after stepping out of that prison. Thus ends the story of not just India's but Asia's first newspaper.

Prathamastami

 [Lekhani Sebaka](#)

Article provided by T.K.V. Karuna
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Prathamastami is celebrated on the eighth day in the month of Margasira (November-December) and is one of the most popular festivals of Odisha. This is widely observed throughout the State. On this occasion the eldest child of the family is honored. He or she is given new clothes and is made to sit on a wooden pedestal (Pidha).



In front of him/her an earthen pot full of water (Purna Kumbha) is placed on handfuls of paddy. Above it a branch of mango leaves and a coconut is placed. Then, the mother or any other elderly lady wishes him/her long-life and good health by praying Sathi Debi, the Goddess who protects children from all kinds of evils.

Rituals of Prathamastami:

Before the first-borns get honored, the mother and all other elderly women of the family offer all the prepared cuisine (Pitha and Khiri) to Sathi Devi first. Then they light the lamp (Arati with Dwipa) before the Goddess. Followed by this the first-borns get honored.

Social Significance:

The social significance of this festival is that the first-borns are brighter and it is ultimately they who take up the burden of the family after the death of the parents. According to psychologists, the first-borns are mostly healthy, obedient and tradition-bound.



Prathamastami

 Lekhani Sebaka

Article provided by T.K.V. Karuna
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Therefore, the family tradition is maintained through them. For such obvious reasons the eldest child is honored to occupy the respectable place in the family and it is he who maintains the heredity.



Tradition in Jagannath Temple Puri:

According to traditions, Lord Madhab of Niali, about 50 kilometres from here in Cuttack district is considered as maternal uncle of the Trinity. Prathamastami religious traditions prescribe maternal uncles to present new cloths to their nephews on 'Prathamastami' day every year.

The practice was revived after a hundred years. Madhab temple servitors brought 'Khanduas' and 'Pattas' for the deities in Puri. They came in a huge procession from Niali all the way to Puri. On arrival of the procession at Singhadwara, they are accorded warm welcome by Sri Jagannath temple servitors and the temple administration.

The cloth packets are taken into the temple and kept in the guard room. Priests would use these cloths to dress the deities on 'Prathamastami'



Head of Krishna:

Cartoon for a mural of the Raslila by Sahib Ram, 1810.



ஆன்மீகம்:

சங்கல்பம் - ஓர் தொகுப்பு

தமிழினியன்

பூஜை துவக்கத்தில் தொடை மீது கை வைத்து ஏதோ சொல்றாங்களே.. என்ன அது? சங்கல்பம் - உறுதி மொழி. இப்படி நடக்க வேண்டும் என பிரார்த்திப்பது.. இந்த இடத்தில், இந்த நேரத்தில், இந்த நாளில்.. இப்படி துல்லியமாக கூறி, பிரபஞ்ச சக்தியிடம் முறையிடுவது.. மேலும்...

சங்கல்பம் என்பது உறுதி பூணுதல் ஆகும். திடசங்கற்பம் என இதனைக் கூறுவர். சங்கல்பம் இல்லாமல் எந்த ஒரு கிரியையும் நடைபெறுவதில் பயனில்லை. இறை சந்நிதியில் நாம் செய்யப்போகும் கிரியையை விளக்கமாக கூறி, அதனை என்ன நோக்கத்திற்காகச் செய்கிறோம் என்பதையும் கூறி, இதனை நான் செய்து முடிப்பேன் என்று உறுதி பூணுவதாகச் சங்கல்பம் அமைந்திருக்கும். சங்கல்பத்திலே இவற்றுக்கு அடுத்தபடியாக முக்கிய இடம்பெறுவது காலமும் இடமுமாகும். என்ன நாளில் எந்த இடத்தில் என்பது மிக விரிவாகவும், அழகாகவும் கூறப்பெறுகின்றது. பொருளுணர்ந்து இதனைக் கூறும்போது அதனைச் சுவைத்து இன்புறலாம்.

அதுமட்டுமல்லாமல் நமது முன்னோர்கள் எவ்வளவு தூரம் வரலாற்று உணர்வு உடையவர்களாக, காலக் கணக்குகளை நுணுக்கமாகப் பேணி வந்தவர்களாக இருந்திருக்கின்றனர் என்பதும், புவியியல் அறிவிலும் சளைக்காத ஞானம்



ஆன்மீகம்:

சங்கல்பம் - ஓர் தொகுப்பு

✍ தமிழினியன்

உடையவர்களாக பிரதேசங்கள் பற்றிய தகவல்களைத் திரட்டி வைத்திருந்திருக்கிறார்கள் என்பதும் இதன் மூலம் அறிந்து வியப்புற முடிகின்றது.

கிரியைகள் நடைபெறும் காலமும் இடமும் மிக முக்கியமானவை. அதனால் எந்த இடத்தில் எந்தக் காலத்தில் இக்கிரியையைச் செய்கிறோம் எனக் கூறிக்கொள்வது மரபு. இப்போது சாதாரணமாக நாம் அறிந்தவரையில் ஆண்டு, மாதம், திதி கூறுவதுடன் காலநிர்ணயம் முடிந்து விடுகிறது. ஆனால் சுருக்கமான முறையிலும், விரிவான முறையிலும் தேவைக்கு ஏற்ற வகையிற் பல்வேறு சந்தர்ப்பங்களிலும் பயன்படுத்தப்படுகின்ற வேறு வேறு வகையான சில சங்கல்ப வாக்கியங்களின் தமிழ்க் கருத்து தரப்படுகின்றது.

“மமோபாத்த ஸமஸ்த துரித க்ஷயத்வாரா ஸ்ரீ பரமேஸ்வர
ப்ரீர்த்யர்த்தம் அஸ்யாம் வர்த்தமானாயாம் சுப திதௌ அஸ்ய தேவஸ்ய...
அஹம் அத்ய கரிஷ்யே”

என்னால் செய்யப்பட்ட எல்லாப் பாபங்களும் அழிந்து போவதற்காகவும், பரமேஸ்வரனின் மகிழ்ச்சிக்காகவும் இன்றைய இந்த சுபதினத்தில், இந்த இடத்தில், இன்ன கிரியையை நான் செய்கிறேன். இது மிகச் சுருக்கமான சங்கல்பமாகும்.

இந்த சங்கற்பத்தில் மிகப்பல விடயங்கள் பற்றி நாம் மனங்கொள்ளலாம்.



1. நாம் ஆலயங்களிலே கிரியைகள் ஆற்றத் தொடங்கும்போது திரிகரணங்களாலும் இறைவனை நாடி அவனையே சிந்தித்து மன ஒருமைப்பாடு கொண்டு அதன்பின் இச்செயலை நான் செய்து முடிப்பேன் என்று உறுதிகூறி சங்கல்பப் செய்வதன் அவசியம் புரிந்து கொள்ளப்படுவது.

2. அந்த சங்கல்பத்திலே என்ன கூறப்படுகிறது என்பதைப் புரிந்து கொள்ளுதல்.

3. அங்கு பயன்படுத்தப்படும் சொற்செட்டான வார்த்தைப் பிரயோகங்களும் அழகான அடுக்கு மொழிகளும் அற்புதமான கற்பனை வளமும் சுவைத்து இன்புறத்தக்கன.

4. புவியியல் ரீதியாக, உலக அமைப்பும் அதன் உட்பிரிவுகளும்சொல்லப்படும் முறை வியப்போடு உற்றுநோக்கத்தக்கவை. அதுமட்டுமன்றிப் புராண இதிஹாசங்களிற் சொல்லப்பட்ட இத்தகைய விடயங்களையும் புவியியல், விஞ்ஞான, வரலாற்றாசிரியர்கள் கூறியிருக்கும் கருத்துக்களையும் ஒப்பிட்டு ஆய்வுசெய்தல்.

5. காலம் பற்றிய சிந்தனை எவ்வாறு நம் முன்னோர்கள் உள்ளத்தில் தெளிவுபடுத்தப்பட்டிருந்தது என்பதை அறிவதோடுபருவகாலங்கள், அதன் உட்பிரிவுகள் இவைபற்றிய விரிவான சிந்தனைகள் அவதானிக்கத்தக்கவை.

6. இவற்றோடு தத்துவார்த்தமான இன்னொரு சிந்தனையும் நமது உள்ளத்தில் துளிர்விடவேண்டும். நாம் ஒரு சிறிய கிராமத்தில் இருக்கிறோம். அந்தக் கிராமத்தின் பெயரையும் விரிவான சங்கல்பங்களின்போது சொல்கிறோம். அந்தக்கிராமத்தை அடுத்த நகரம், மாகாணம், நாடு, கண்டம் என விரிந்து கொண்டு போகின்ற இந்தப் பிரபஞ்சம் எனும் பெரும் அண்டத்தை இங்கு நாம் மனக்கண்ணில் காண முடிகிறது. நாம் இந்தப் பேரண்டத்தின் ஒரு துளியில் நிற்கின்றோம் என எண்ணி நமது சிறுமையையும் ஆண்டவனின் பெருமையையும் கருதவேண்டும். இதேபோல் நமது வாழ்நாள் ஆகக்கூடியது நூறு ஆண்டுகள். இந்தச் சங்கல்பத்திலே சொல்லப்படுகின்ற காலக்கணக்குகள் - யுக யுகாந்திரமாக இந்தப் பிரபஞ்ச இயக்கத்தை நடத்தும் ஆண்டவனின் மகத்துவம்தான் என்னே என்ற வியப்பும் குறிப்பிடத்தக்கதன்றோ?



A TO Z INDIA Magazine wishes a Happy Diwali 2021...!

**Have a happy and safe Diwali.
May your Diwali be free from darkness and abundant with light.**

Jay Jagannath, Jagannath Puri Temple, Odisha

Odhana Shashti, Ghoda Lagi besha of the Trinity

 [Lekhani Sebaka](#)

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It is observed on Margasira Sukla Sasthi Tithi i.e. the sixth day of the bright fortnight of Margasira (November-December). Margasira Sukla Sasthi is also celebrated as Prabarana Sasthi. From this day Ghodalagi of the deities begins and the deities wear winter garments (heavy winter garments) till Magha Sukla Panchami or Basanta Panchami i.e. 5th day of bright Magha (January-February).

It is believed that chill winter season starts from this day, as we adopt winter garments with the change of season so also the Lord of the universe who is performing "Manabiya Leela" also feels the seasonal effect and His Sebakas (servitors) cover the deities with winter clothes from top to bottom and only the face (Shri Mukha) is kept open.



***Incredible India:
Images of
India
through
Paintwork***



 **Chandra**



***Incredible India:
Images of
India
through
Paintwork***



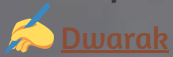
 **Chandra**



The Nānakpanthi sect was founded by the well-known Bāba Nānak, a Khatri of the Lahore District, who lived between 1469 and 1538–39. He is the real founder of Sikhism, but this development of his followers into a military and political organisation was the work of his successors, Har Govind and Govind Singh. Nānak himself was a religious reformer of the same type as Kabīr and others, who tried to abolish the worship of idols and all the body of Hindu superstition, and substitute a belief in a single unseen deity without form or special name. As with most of the other Vaishnava reformers, Nānak's creed was largely an outcome of his observation of Islām. "There is nothing in his doctrine," Sir E.D. MacLagan says, "to distinguish it in any marked way from that of the other saints who taught the higher forms of Hinduism in northern India. The unity of God, the absence of any real distinction between Hindus and Musalmans, the uselessness of ceremonial, the vanity of earthly wishes, even the equality of castes, are topics common to Nānak and the Bhagats; and the Adi-Granth or sacred book compiled by Nānak is full of quotations from elder or contemporary teachers, who taught essentially the same doctrine as Nānak himself." It was partly, he explains, because Nānak was the first reformer in the Punjab, and thus had the field practically to himself, and partly in consequence of the subsequent development of Sikhism, that his movement has been so successful and his adherents now outnumber those of any other reformer of the same period. Nānak's doctrines were also of a very liberal character. The burden of his teaching was that there is no Hindu and no Muhammadan. He believed in transmigration, but held that the successive stages were but purifications, and that at last the soul, cleansed from sin, went to dwell with its maker. He prescribed no caste rules or ceremonial observances, and indeed condemned them as

unnecessary and even harmful; but he made no violent attack on them, he insisted on no alteration in existing civil and social institutions, and was content to leave the doctrine of the equality of all men in the sight of God to work in the minds of his followers. He respected the Hindu veneration of the cow and the Muhammadan abhorrence of the hog, but recommended as a higher rule than either total abstinence from flesh. Nothing could have been gentler or less aggressive than his doctrine, nothing more unlike the teaching of his great successor Govind.

Two other causes contributed to swell the numbers of the Nānakpanthis. The first of these was that during the late Mughal Empire the Hindus of the frontier tracts of the Punjab were debarred by the fanaticism of their Muhammadan neighbours from the worship of idols; and they therefore found it convenient to profess the faith of Nānak which permitted them to declare themselves as worshippers of one God, while not forcing them definitely to break with caste and Hinduism. The second was that Guru Govind Singh required the absolute abandonment of caste as a condition of the initiation of a Sikh; and hence many who would not consent to this remained Nānakpanthis without adopting Sikhism. The Nānakpanthis of the present day are roughly classified as Sikhs who have not adopted the term Singh, which is attached to the names of all true Sikhs; they also do not forbid smoking or insist on the adoption of the five Kakkas or K's which are in theory the distinguishing marks of the Sikh; the Kes or uncut hair and unshaven beard; the Kachh or short drawers ending above the knee; the Kara or iron bangle; the Khanda or steel knife; and the Kanga or comb. The Nānakpanthi retains the Hindu custom of shaving the whole head except the choti or scalp-lock, and hence is often known as a Munda or shaven Sikh.



The sect do not prohibit the consumption of meat and liquor, but some of them eat only the flesh of animals killed by the Sikh method of Jatka, or cutting off the head by a blow on the back of the neck. Their only form of initiation is the ordinary Hindu practice of drinking the foot-nectar or sugar and water in which the toe of the guru has been dipped, and this is not very common. It is known as the Charan ka pāhul or foot-baptism, as opposed to the Khande ka pāhul or sword-baptism of the Gouindi Sikhs. Bāba Nānak himself, Sir E. Maclagan states, is a very favourite object of veneration among Sikhs of all kinds, and the picture of the guru with his long white beard and benevolent countenance is constantly met with in the sacred places of the Punjab.

Nānakpanthis in the Central Provinces:

In 1901 about 13,000 persons returned themselves as Nānakpanthis in the Central Provinces, of whom 7000 were Banjāras and the remainder principally Kunbis, Ahīrs and Telis. The Banjāras generally revere Nānak.

Udasis:

The Udāsis are a class of ascetics of the Nānakpanthi or Sikh faith, whose order was founded by Sri Chand, the younger son of Nānak. They are recruited from all castes and will eat food from any Hindu. They are almost all celibates, and pay special reverence to the Adi-Granth of Nānak, but also respect the Granth of Govind Singh and attend the same shrines as the Sikhs generally. Their service consists of a ringing of bells and blare of instruments, and they chant hymns and wave lights before the Adi-Granth and the picture of Bāba Nānak. In the Central Provinces members of several orders which have branched off from the main Nānakpanthi community are known as Udāsi. Thus some of them say they do not go to any temples and worship Nirankal or the deity

without shape or form, a name given to the supreme God by Nānak. In the Punjab the Nirankaris constitute a separate order from the Udāsis. These Udāsis wear a long rope of sheep's wool round the neck and iron chains round the wrist and waist. They carry half a coconut shell as a begging-bowl and have the chameta or iron tongs, which can also be closed and used as a poker. Their form of salutation is 'Matha Tek,' or 'I put my head at your feet.' They never cut their hair and have a long string of wool attached to the choti or scalp-lock, which is coiled up under a little cap. They say that they worship Nirankal without going to temples, and when they sit down to pray they make a little fire and place ghī or sweetmeats upon it as an offering. When begging they say 'Alakh,' and they accept any kind of uncooked and cooked food from Brāhmans.

Suthra Shāhis:

Another mendicant Nānakpanthi order, whose members visit the Central Provinces, is that of the Suthra Shāhis. Here, however, they often drop the special name, and call themselves simply **Nānakshahi**. The origin of the order is uncertain, and Sir E. Maclagan gives various accounts. Here they say that their founder was a disciple of Nānak, who visited Mecca and brought back the Seli and Syahi which are their distinctive badges. The Seli is a rope of black wool which they tie round their heads like a turban, and Syāhi the ink with which they draw a black line on their foreheads, though this is in fact usually made with charcoal. They carry a wallet in which these articles are kept, and also the two small ebony sticks which they strike against each other as an accompaniment to their begging-songs. The larger stick is dedicated to Nānak and the smaller to the Goddess Kālī.

A proverb says in allusion to their rapacity:
Kehu mare, Kehu jīye, Suthra gur batāsa piye.

இராமர்:

அயோத்தியின் அரசன்

ஆதித்தியன்

மன்னர் தசரதன் அயோத்தியின் ஆட்சியாளராக இருந்தார். அவருக்கு மூன்று ராணிகள், கௌசல்யா, கைகேயி மற்றும் சுமித்ரா இருந்தனர். அவரது ராணிகளிடமிருந்து, தசரதருக்கு ராம, லட்சுமண, பரதன் மற்றும் சத்ருக்னன் ஆகிய நான்கு மகன்கள் பிறந்தனர்.

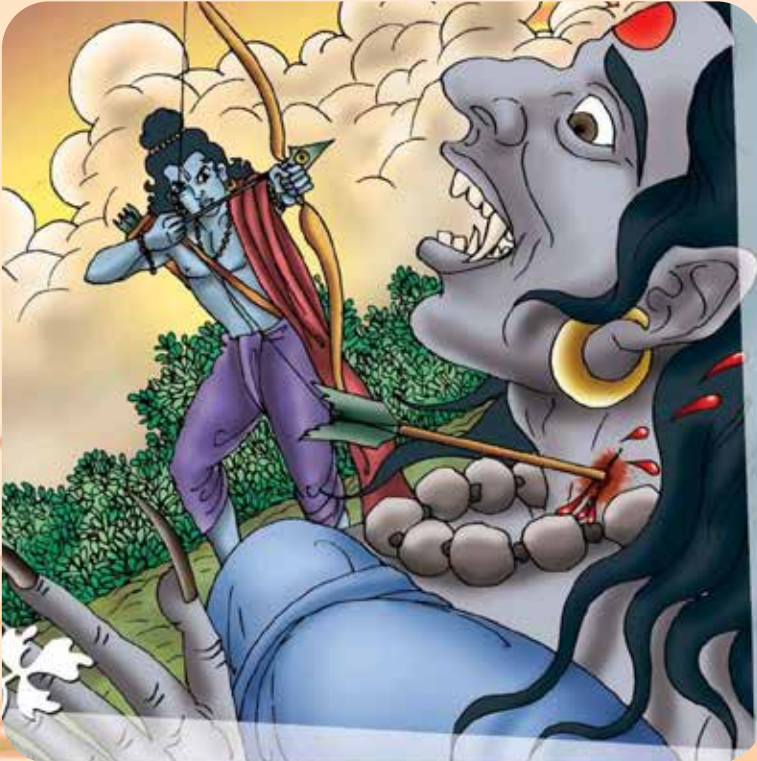
நான்கு சகோதரர்களும் ஒருவருக்கொருவர் மிகவும் விரும்பினர். அனைவரும் வீரமும் ஞானமும் கொண்டவர்கள். ஆனால் இராமன்



வில்வித்தையில் ஈடு இணையற்றவனாக இருந்தான், "இராமன் தன் இலக்கை தவறவிட மாட்டான்" என அவர்கள் அடிக்கடி சொல்வார்கள்.

ஒரு காட்டில் முனிவர்கள் மத்தியில் பீதியை ஏற்படுத்தும் அசுரர்கள் இருந்தனர். எனவே, முனிவர் விஸ்வாமித்ரர் அசுரர்களுக்கு எதிராகப் போரிடுவதற்காக இராமனையும் இலட்சுமணனையும் தன்னுடன் காட்டுக்கு அழைத்துச் சென்றார்.

முனிவர்கள் யாகம் செய்யும்போது இராமரும் இலட்சுமணனும் பாதுகாப்புடன் நின்றார்கள். ஒரு நாள், தடகா என்ற அசுர அரசி அங்கு வந்தாள். இராமனும்



இலட்சுமணனும் அவர்களது அம்புகளால் சண்டையிட்டு அவளைக் கொன்றாள்.

இதற்கிடையில், ஜனக அரசர் தனது மகள் சீதைக்காக ஒரு சுயம்வரத்தை நடத்தினார். சிவபெருமானின் வில்லை தூக்க வேண்டியிருந்தது. வில்லை யாராலும் தூக்க முடியவில்லை. ஆனால் இராமர் வில்லைத் தூக்கியதால் அது துண்டுகளாக உடைந்தது.

இராமர்:

அயோத்தியின் அரசன்

ஆதித்தியன்

இராமர் வெற்றி பெற்றதைக் கண்டு மன்னர் ஜனகர் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைந்தார். "அவர் என் மகளுக்கு பொருத்தமான மாப்பிள்ளையாக இருப்பார்," என்று அவர் நினைத்தார். இராமரும் சீதையும் பிரம்மாண்டமாக திருமணம் செய்து கொண்டனர்.

நாட்கள் கழிந்தன. தசரத அரசன் இராமனை அடுத்த அரசனாக முடிசூட்ட முடிவு செய்தார். "தந்தையே, உங்கள் விருப்பம் எனக்கு முதன்மையானது.



நான் உங்களை ஒருபோதும் கைவிட மாட்டேன்" என்றார் இராமர்.

இராமன் எப்படி அரசனாக முடியும்?" என்று கைகேயி அரசனிடம் கேட்டாள். அவன் அவளுக்கு இரண்டு விருப்பங்களை முன்பே வழங்கினார். இப்போது அவள் தன் மகன் பரதனை அரசனாகவும், இராமனை பதினான்கு வருடங்கள் நாடு கடத்தவும் விரும்பினாள்.



காட்டில், ஷூர்பனகா, இராவணனின் சகோதரி, இராமனால் நிராகரிக்கப்பட்டாள். அவள் இராவணனிடம் முறையிட்டாள். சீதையை கவர்ந்திழுக்க அவன் தன் மாமாவை ஒரு தங்க மானாக அனுப்பினான். சீதை விரும்பும் மாணை இராமன் தேடிச் சென்றார்.

இராமனின் குரலில், உதவிக்காக மான் கூச்சலிட்டது. குரலைக் கேட்டதும், "போ லக்ஷ்மணா! உங்கள்

இராமர்:

அயோத்தியின் அரசன்

ஆதித்தியன்

சகோதரர் சிக்கலில் இருக்கிறார்" என்று சீதா கூறினார். இலட்சுமணன் ஒரு கோட்டை வரைந்து, சீதையிடம் "இந்த கோட்டை கடக்காதீர்" என்றார்.

அப்போது, இராவணன் ஒரு முனிவராக சீதையிடம் வந்தான், "பசித்த முனிவருக்கு உணவு கொடுக்க மாட்டாயா" என்று அவன் சீதையைக் கேட்டான். அவனுக்கு உணவு கொடுக்க அவள் கோட்டை தாண்டியபோது, இராவணன் அவனுடைய உண்மையான



உருவத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு, சீதையை கடத்திச் சென்றான். இதற்கிடையில், இராமர் இலட்சுமணனைப் பார்த்து, "நீ ஏன் சீதையை விட்டு வந்தாய்" என்று கேட்டார். "உங்கள் கூக்குரலைக் கேட்டோம், நான் உதவி செய்ய வந்தேன்," என்று அவர் கூறினார். அவர்கள் திரும்பி சென்றனர். ஆனால் சீதா எங்கும் இல்லை.

அவர்கள் சீதையைத் தேடியபோது, அவர்கள் கழுகுகளின் அரசன் ஐடாயுவை பார்த்தார்கள், "இராவணன் சீதையை அழைத்துச் சென்றான். நான் அவரைத் தடுக்க முயன்றபோது, அவன் என் இறக்கைகளை வெட்டினான்" என்றார்.



இராமன் வானர மன்னன் சுக்ரீவனுடன் கூட்டணி வைத்துக் கொண்டார். அவனுடைய மந்திரியான அனுமன் இராமனுக்கு உதவினான். இராவணனைக் கொன்று சீதையை மீட்டனர். அவர்கள் நாடுகடத்தப்பட்ட காலம் முடிந்ததால், அயோத்திக்குத் திரும்பினர், இராமர் அரசரானார்.

Why Tulasi is not used for Ganesha Chaturthi celebrations?



Tulasi is the daughter of Yamadharmaraja (God of Righteousness). In her youthful days, she was a great devotee of Narayana (Lord Vishnu). Once she was walking along the banks of Ganges. She came across beautiful Ganesha sitting in deep meditation to Lord Krishna. Being son of Ma Parvati, Ganesha was very handsome. Moreover any person in deep meditation state looks more handsome. So you can visualize the beauty of Lord Ganesha in that meditative state. Like Tulasi Ma, Ganesha was also in his prime and of marriageable age plus both were devoted to forms of Lord Vishnu. So Tulasi ma immediately fell in love with Lord Ganesha, she asked Ganesha to marry her.

At that time Lord Ganesha was a bachelor (Brahmachari) which is natural for any meditator. Because in meditation one has to be aloof and meditator tries to explore oneself rather than going in a relationship. So Lord Ganesha was not looking for marrying anyone. Moreover he only wanted to marry someone who possess the same divine qualities like her Mother Parvati. So Ganesha politely refused Tulasi Ma for marriage. This broke her heart. Tulasi took this as an insult and she became very angry. In her anger, Tulasi Ma cursed Ganesha that one day he will get married against his wish of not getting married.

Lord Ganesha also in turn cursed Tulasi that she will be married to an Asura (Demon) and then under a blessings from the Sages (or Gods) will become a plant. Listening this curse, Tulasi Ma realized her mistake and she begged Ganesha for forgiveness and prayed to him with divine hymns. Listening her sincere prayers Ganesha became pleased and he said "You will be regarded as supreme among the plants. All Gods will be happy with your fragrance. Lord Vishnu will be specially glad to receive the worship with your leaves. But you will always be unacceptable by me in worship". Saying this, Lord Ganesha left the place. Later on, as per the curse Tulasi Ma married the demon king called 'Shankhachuda' (or with Jalandhara). She was a very devoted wife and they lived happily for a number of years. Then one day her husband was killed in a battle with Lord Shiva.

Vishnu appeared in his true form and urged Tulasi to abandon her earthly body and return to his celestial abode. In her anger and grief, she cursed Vishnu to be turned into stone. Vishnu turned into a stone and reside on riverbank Gandaki River. People and devotees call the stone as Shaaligrama. Tulasi Ma's mortal remains decayed and became the Gandaki River, while in her next birth, she was born as sacred Tulasi plant. The Gandaki River, also known as the Narayani and the Gandak, is one of the major rivers in Nepal and a left bank tributary of the River Ganga in India. Look at our traditional science how it describes the origin of Tulasi plant both spiritually and scientifically.





Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore:
Glimpses of Bengal: Select Letters

 Chandra

In the 1890s, Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, travelled across Bengal to manage his family's far-flung agricultural estates. Travelling in his houseboat, up and down the Padma River and its many tributaries, Tagore vividly captures the breathtaking imagery of the Bengali countryside and the reticent grace of the day-to-day village life. Sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant, the settings of his letters formed the backdrop of many of his poems and plays (e.g. The Post Office). His letters, many of which were addressed to his niece Indira Devi, make for a lighthearted and captivating reading. Tagore is sure to charm you with his wondrous story telling and powerful imagination.

Bandora by the Sea:

October 1885

The unsheltered sea heaves and heaves and blanches into foam. It sets me thinking of some tied-up monster straining at its bonds, in front of whose gaping jaws we build our homes on the shore and watch it lashing its tail. What immense strength, with waves swelling like the muscles of a giant! From the beginning of creation there has been this feud between land and water: the dry earth slowly and silently adding to its domain and spreading a broader and broader lap for its children; the ocean receding step by step, heaving and sobbing and beating its breast in despair. Remember the sea was once sole monarch, utterly free. Land rose from its womb, usurped its throne, and ever since the maddened old creature, with hoary crest of foam, wails and laments continually, like King Lear exposed to the fury of the elements.



Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore:
Glimpses of Bengal: Select Letters

 Chandra

July 1887

I am in my twenty-seventh year. This event keeps thrusting itself before my mind—nothing else seems to have happened of late. But to reach twenty-seven—is that a trifling thing? To pass the meridian of the twenties on one's progress towards thirty? Thirty—that is to say maturity—the age at which people expect fruit rather than fresh foliage. But, alas, where is the promise of fruit? As I shake my head, it still feels brimful of luscious frivolity, with not a trace of philosophy. Folk are beginning to complain: “Where is that which we expected of you—that in hope of which we admired the soft green of the shoot? Are we to put up with immaturity for ever? It is high time for us to know what we shall gain from you. We want an estimate of the proportion of oil which the blindfold, mill-turning, unbiased critic can squeeze out of you.” It has ceased to be possible to delude these people into waiting expectantly any longer. While I was under age they trustfully gave me credit; it is sad to disappoint them now that I am on the verge of thirty. But what am I to do? Words of wisdom will not come! I am utterly incompetent to provide things that may profit the multitude. Beyond a snatch of song, some tittle-tattle, a little merry fooling, I have been unable to advance. And as the result, those who held high hopes will turn their wrath on me; but did any one ever beg them to nurse these expectations? Such are the thoughts which assail me since one fine Bysakh morning I awoke amidst fresh breeze and light, new leaf and flower, to find that I had stepped into my twenty-seventh year.

The benevolent and famous son of King Mahabali



Hello everyone....!

Let's know about Banasura, one of the hundred and famous sons of King Mahabali.

Bali was a very benevolent king and a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Bali had a hundred sons, of whom Banasura with his thousand arms was the eldest. Banasura was a devotee of Lord Siva, and when Siva performed his famous 'Tandau' dance, Banasura used his thousand arms to play the 'Mridanga' in accompaniment. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Shiva asked Banasura to demand a boon.

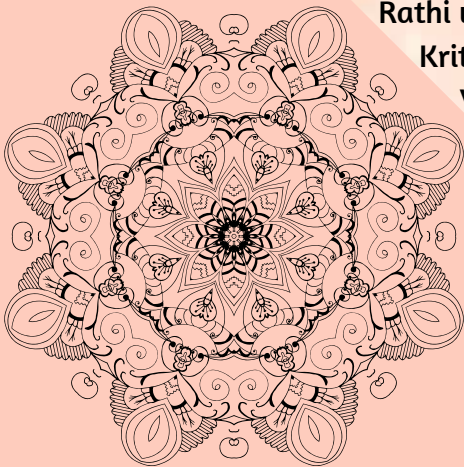


Banasura asked for Siva to be his protector just like Lord Vishnu was his father's protector. The boon was granted, and Banasura became invincible. Soon he became cruel and arrogant, so much so, even the gods were afraid of him. Banasura had a pretty daughter by the name of Usha. Many suitors came asking for her hand, but Banasura refused them all and had her shut in a fortress called 'Agnigarh' along with her friends. In her sleep Usha saw a handsome young man and fell in love with him. Chithralekha was a close friend of Usha and a great artist. She drew a picture of the young man based on Usha's descriptions. When the drawing was completed, they both knew the young man was Anirudh, the grandson of Lord Krishna. Using her magical powers Chithralekha flew to Dwaraka and brought Anirudh to Usha's side, and they lived together. In course of time Banasura learned about this and flew into a rage. He bound Anirudh with snakes and had him imprisoned.

When Lord Krishna heard about this he came with a mighty army to rescue Anirudh. A great battle ensued. Lord Siva joined the fray, fighting on behalf of Banasura. But even after prolonged fighting Lord Siva was not able to defeat Lord Krishna, and eventually sued for peace, asking Lord Krishna to spare the life of his devotee Banasura. Lord Krishna agreed and granted immortality to Banasura, but cut off all but four of his thousand arms. He brought Anirudh and Usha to Dwaraka amidst much rejoicing and jubilation.

Banasura retired into the Himalayas to spend the remainder of his life in the service of Lord Siva. Anirudh was none other than Grandson of Lord Krishna and son of Pradyumna, an incarnation of Kamadeva as per Lord Vishnu's boon granted to Rathi, Kamadeva's wife and daughter of Prajapati Daksha after he was burned to ashes from Lord Shiva's anger.

Rathi was the daughter of Prajapati Daksha and wife of Kamadeva in Satyayuga/ Kritayuga. In Dwaparayuga, Rathi incarnated as Rukmaavati, princess of Vidharbha and daughter of Rukmi. Also Rathi incarnated as Mayavati/ Bhanavati, foster mother of Pradyumna, who told truth of Pradyumna's birth and how he was abducted by demon Sambara. Banasura's/ descendants had their own kingdom known as the Mahavalis Banas/Brihadbanas in the present Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts of Karnataka.





Everyone would keep lemon under tyres when they buy new vehicles, but how many of us know the science behind this procedure? They tell to ward off the bad omens, but let me tell you the true science behind it.

During those times there were tongas and bullock carts were carrying us to long distances. In this journey the horses or bulls would go through different terrain of lands like dry, wet, marshy lands etc and their foot would get infected. Therefore they were made to stamp lemons before starting the journey. Because lemons had citric acid which has broad spectrum antibacterial properties. This Indian thought of that time is still being researched by the western science.

By this we should know that our ancestors were far more advanced than western civilization and also made us know about the exact meaning of this procedure.



Neelakandeswarar Temple, Padmanabhapuram, Kanyakumari District



Neelakandeswarar Temple is dedicated to Bhagwan Shiva located at Kalkulam near Padmanabhapuram in Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu.

The temple is a part of the famed Shivalaya Ottam conducted during Shivaratri. It is the seventh temple in the run sequence. Presiding Deity is called as Neelakandeswarar/ Mahadevar.





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